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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on integrating "educational" and "training" approaches in the Communication Training and Development classroom. The paper discusses distinctions between the two approaches and the implications for instructors of the course. It offers 10 concrete suggestions for navigating between communication "education" and communication "training" approaches. According to the paper, "education" includes topics such as: adult learning theories, the scope and field of communication training and development, societal issues impacting training and development, organizational dynamics and politics, qualitative and quantitative approaches to needs assessment and evaluation, ethical issues in training and development, training modes, and training resources and technologies; in the "train-the-trainer" mode the instructor is required to provide/reinforce training in: interpersonal communication skills, presentation foundations, conducting needs assessment, techniques for measuring training and development outcomes, administering instruments, responding to trainees, and so on. (Contains 22 suggested resources.) (NKA)

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"Modeling and Facilitating in the Communication Training and Development Classroom"

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This presentation focuses on integrating "educational" and "training" approaches in the Communication Training and Development classroom. Distinctions between the two approaches, and the implications for instructors of the course will be discussed. Ten concrete suggestions for navigating between communication "education" and communication "training" approaches will be offered.

Knowing and Doing Communication Training and Development

I operate from the premise that educational processes are qualitatively different than training and development processes. The two are intertwined and reinforce each other, but the learning processes and the measurement of outcomes associated with each differs. It is my contention that students in Communication Training and Development classes learn the nuances of effective methods of educating and training via instructors' modeling and facilitating of the two learning modes.

I see the two functions of the Communication Training and Development instructor as educating (helping students to know about training and development) and training (helping students to do training and development). The role of the educator is to impart knowledge to potential trainers and evaluators of training services about educational theories and concepts relative to communication training and development. Generally speaking, this education includes topics such as: adult learning theories, the scope and field of communication training and development, societal issues impacting training and development, organizational dynamics and politics, qualitative and quantitative approaches to needs assessment and evaluation, ethical issues in training and development, training modes, and training resources and technologies. The instructor also serves in a train-the-trainer capacity. This requires the instructor to provide/reinforce training in: interpersonal communication skills, presentation foundations, conducting a needs assessment, techniques for measuring training and development outcomes, administering instruments, responding to trainees, and so on. Navigating between the two educational modes is not always a smooth journey.

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Following are ten suggestions for navigating smoothly between the two instructional modes. These ideas have been culled from my experiences teaching Communication Training and Development at the undergraduate level, as well as from over ten years of training experience in organizational settings.

10 Suggestions for Navigating Between Educational and Training Modes

1. Include a brief explanation in the syllabus that the course will promote different modes of learning. For example:
"This course will require you to be an active participant in the learning process. We will be alternating between traditional educational approaches to theories and concepts in communication training and development, and a hands-on, applied approach to training and development in communication..."

2. During the first class session, explicitly explain to students that you will be operating in two modes. First, you will serve as an educator, imparting knowledge and helping them to understand the theoretical issues in communication training and development. Second, you will be acting as a trainer, demonstrating techniques and providing various avenues for them to practice skills.

3. Facilitate a discussion among students regarding similarities and differences between education and training so they can compare and contrast with specific examples. Ask them to share their experiences with on-the-job training, Resident Advisor training, sports training, music or dance lessons, computer training, and other topics with which they are familiar. (This discussion flows well from II above.) For example:

education	training
theories	skills
thinking	doing
open-mind	hands-on
memorization	practice

4. A related discussion is the difference between content and process dimensions of training. Help students see the difference between the "what" and "how" of training by asking them to comment on their reactions to all structured activities. First ask about content: "What did you learn from this?" each level. Then ask about process: "How did you learn about this?"

5. Alternate among learning modes during the progression of the course and clearly identify to students the transitions from one mode to another. One option is to identify modes in the course syllabus or lesson plan by devoting the first part of the course primarily to concepts, and the second part of the course primarily to application of concepts and skills. Another option is to plan each class session as "learning segments." This helps establish classroom norms that clarify behavioral expectations regarding different learning modes. For example, the first class segment is lecturette, the second class segment is a training experience with students practicing skills or engaging in an activity such as a role-play or simulation, the third class segment focuses on debriefing students' experiences, and the fourth class segment sums up issues and focuses on implications for doing training and development.

6. Suspend course content for periodic discussions regarding the educational process. Questions might include the following:

- In which mode am I currently operating?
- Tell me about process dimensions.
- Are there other ways to present this material?
- How could this material be adapted to a different audience?

7. Provide structured learning experiences for students which require you, as the instructor, to model the use of different modes. To illustrate, a class session on the use of instruments might proceed as follows:

a. Teach about theory and issues behind instrument
b. Briefly comment on your experiences with this particular instrument
c. Administer instrument to students to increase familiarity and to demonstrate techniques for using instruments
d. Conduct debriefing on instrument and outcomes
e. Run a training session on how to administer instruments with detailed step-by-step instructions and attention to trainee issues such as learning disabilities, literacy, sight, and math abilities.
f. Facilitate debriefing session on using instruments and students' levels of comfort and understanding.

8. Share several samples of a variety of training designs and approaches, including professionally produced videos, training manuals, CD-ROM, on-line courses, and seminars. Promotional brochures distributed by organizations like Career Track, and the American Management Association are helpful in highlighting the range of communication-related topics offered, promotional work, instructional designs, delivery systems, and costs. To strengthen the educational component, include articles evaluating the effectiveness of certain communication programs (e.g., Braithwaite & Labrecque, 1994; Clark, Willihnganz, & O'Dell, 1985; Siebold, Kudsi, & Rude, 1993; Wurtele, Saslawsky, Miller, Marrs, & Britcher, 1986). Students also respond well to viewing segments of current training videos and then critiquing them according to principals taught in the course.

9. Employ graded learning projects and assignments which expose students to a mix of traditional educational measures (such as a test on theories and concepts) and applied projects (such as conducting a brief needs assessment). The final project should require students to design, implement, and present a communication-based training module which incorporates all elements of the training process. Students in my course have delivered high quality projects on such topics as introduction to communication models for elementary school teachers, communication skills for new employee orientation leaders, interpersonal communication basics for telephone operators, and relational skills for working with students with disabilities.

10. Model effective training and development techniques throughout the course. Include as many training elements as is practically possible. For instance:

- Compile student data prior to course and conduct a brief needs assessment for students during first session.
- Run an "expectations check" at the beginning of the semester and report back with the list at the end of the semester.

- Conduct session evaluations at the end of each class/week/course segment.
- Use ice breakers periodically.
- Have students wear name tags and/or use name tents.
- Use flip charts and presentation technologies to reinforce content.
- Provide debriefing sessions after each key topic.

Most importantly, allow yourself to be educated and trained by students in your class. This helps to demonstrate and reinforce one of the strengths associated with adult learners: they have numerous life experiences to share and will learn most effectively in an environment where they feel supported.

Summary

Instructors of Communication Training and Development courses must position themselves as both educators and trainers. They must model these learning approaches for students by acting in both modes, by creating a course that sustains education and training, and by facilitating structured learning activities that allow students to learn equally from both approaches. The ten suggestions offered here are intended to assist instructors in educating and training students about Communication Training and Development.

Suggested Resources

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